Holiday

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SCOOBY-DOO! and the HAUNTED HALLOWEEN MASK

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FREE SCOOBY-DOO MASK

by Jesse Leon McCann

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BY JESSE LEON McCANN

DEDICATED TO MY FATHER, DISTINGUISHED MUSICIAN JESS McCANN

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Every Halloween, the Mystery, Inc. gang throws a big party for all the kids in Coolsville. There's always lots of music and games and dancing and scrumptious munchies! But this year, things were different – Scooby-Doo and Shaggy weren't there!

So, even though everybody was having a good time, they kept asking, "Where are Shaggy and Scooby-Doo?"

Just then, Scooby-Doo and Shaggy came racing through the front door.

"Zoinks!" cried Shaggy. "There's a ghost! And it followed us here!"

"A rhost! A rhost!" Scooby barked, trembling with fright.

All the kids at the party started screaming. They ran around and jumped and bumped into one another as they tried to hide!

"Wait a minute!" Fred tried to calm everyone down. "There's no such thing as ghosts."

"Oh yeah?" Shaggy shivered, hiding under the coffee table and pointing at the door. "Then, like, what's that?"

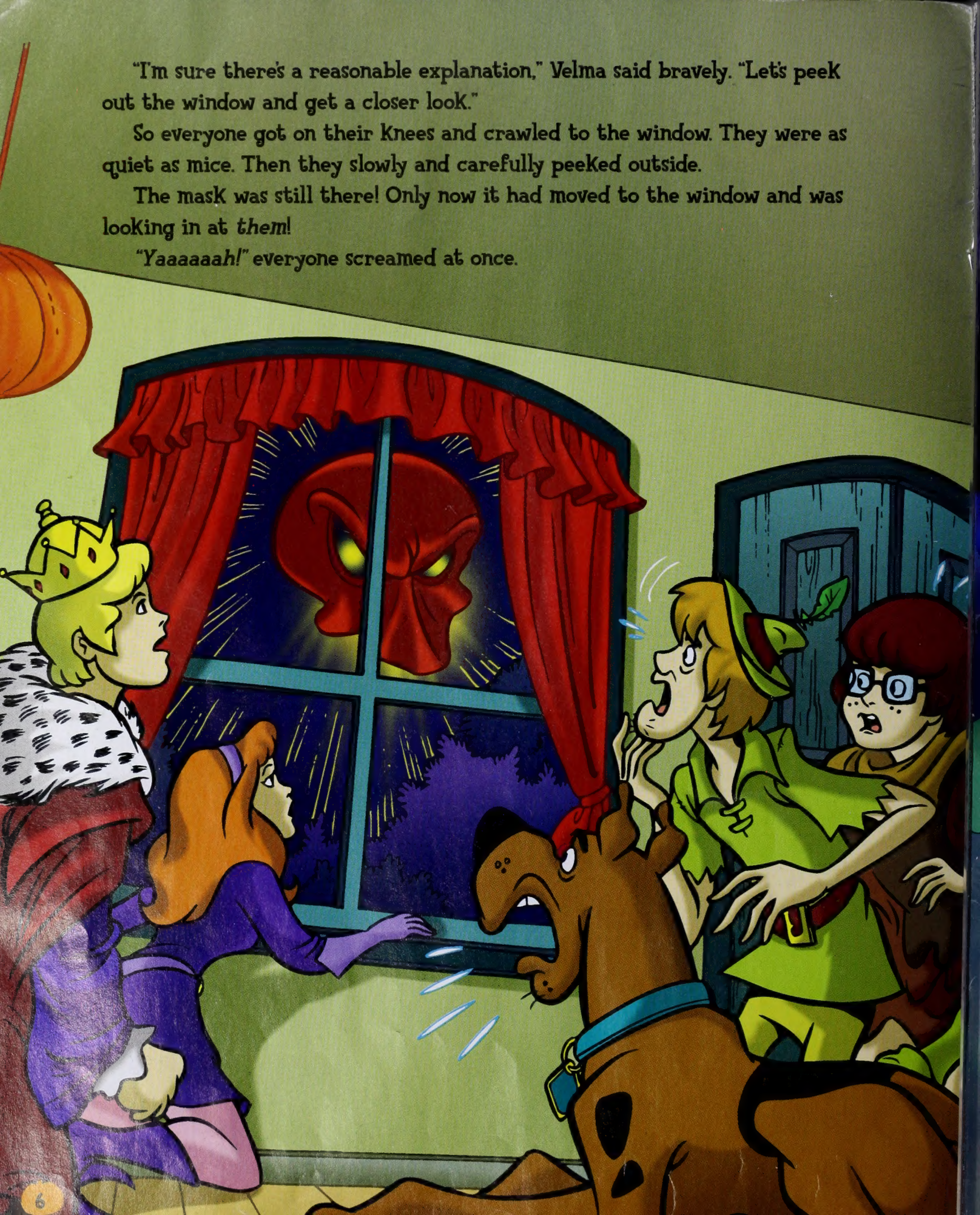
Everyone looked out the front door. Sure enough, floating in the darkness outside was a mask. It drifted there all by itself, looking incredibly eerie. In fact, it looked as if it were being worn by a ghost! Scooby quickly slammed the door.

"I'm sure there's a reasonable explanation," Velma said bravely. "Let's peek out the window and get a closer look."

So everyone got on their knees and crawled to the window. They were as quiet as mice. Then they slowly and carefully peeked outside.

The mask was still there! Only now it had moved to the window and was looking in at *them*!

"Yaaaaaah!" everyone screamed at once.



"Come on, gang, we've got another mystery to solve!" Fred declared. He headed outside. The mask had disappeared. It was a windy night and all the bushes were swaying back and forth. That made it even creepier.

"Like, that's okay, Fred," Shaggy said from inside the house. "All us kids will wait here. Right, Scoob?"

Scooby stuck his thumb into his mouth, acting like a little baby. "Reah! Roo roo!"

"The *children* will stay here where it's safe." Daphne scowled. "*We'll* go outside with Fred."

"Ruh-roh!" Scooby groaned as Velma dragged him and Shaggy outside.

Out on the street, the gang looked for the haunted mask, but they couldn't find it. In fact, the street was empty. The only person around was an old man outside his house. He smiled at them in a strange way.

"Who's that?" asked Daphne.

"He just moved in last week," answered Velma. "I haven't met him yet. Now would be a good time to say hello and ask if he's seen our mystery mask."

"Bwah-ha-ha-ha-ha!"

. . . the old man with the crazy laugh!

"Zoinks!" Shaggy skidded to a sudden stop.

So did Scooby. He couldn't believe their bad luck. Not only had the old man caught them, but he'd brought along a bunch of other ghosts, too!

"Roh-no!" cried Scooby.

As Shaggy and Scooby stood frozen in terror, the first mask descended on them!

Scooby and Shaggy backed away, grabbing each other for support.

"Don't worry, Scooby! We won't give up without a fight," Shaggy said. "Uh . . . like, how do you fight a ghost again?"

"Ream and ry?" answered Scooby hopefully.

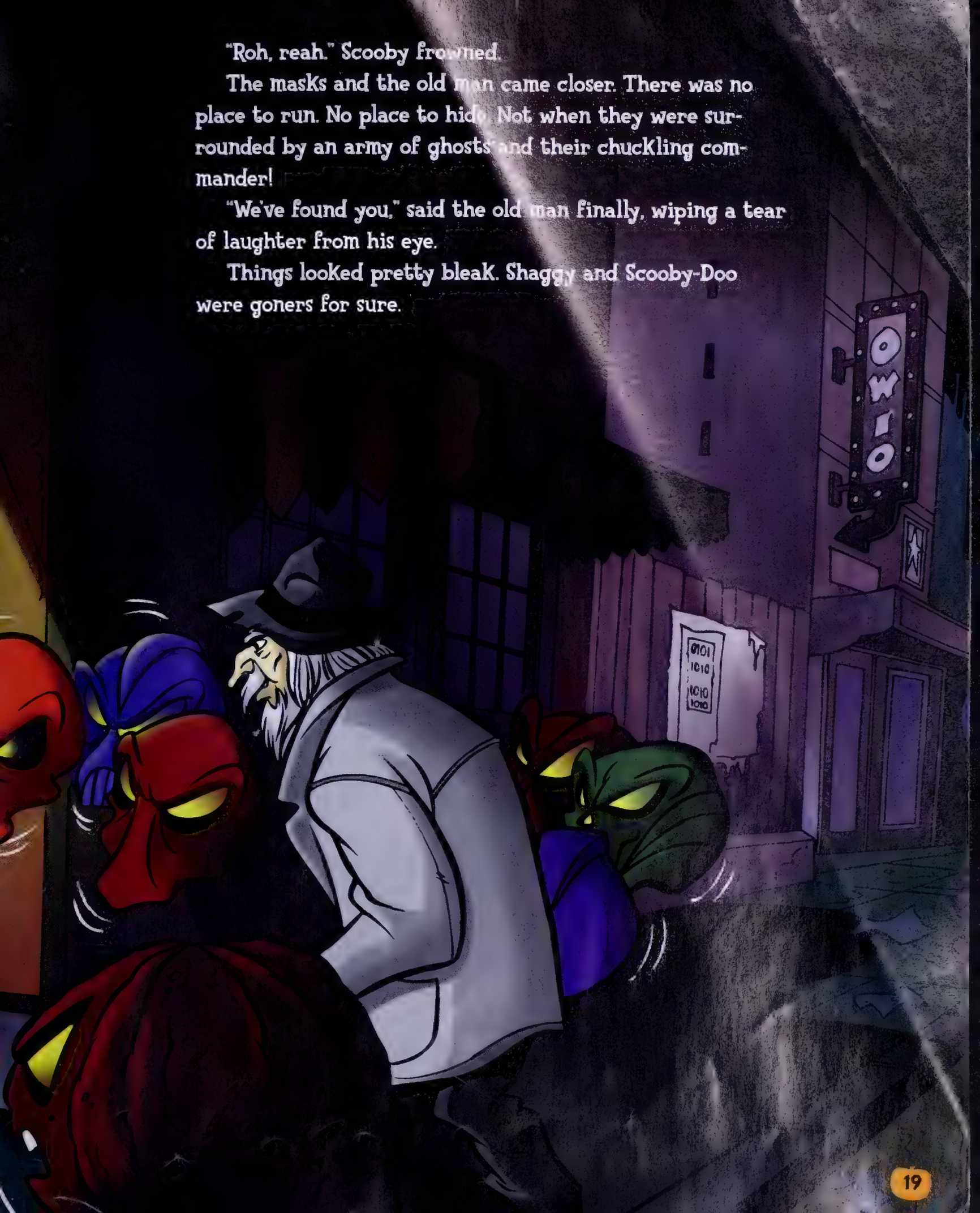
"Scream and cry?" Shaggy blinked at his pal. "I'm pretty sure we already tried that, Scoob."

"Roh, reah." Scooby frowned.

The masks and the old man came closer. There was no place to run. No place to hide. Not when they were surrounded by an army of ghosts and their chuckling commander!

"We've found you," said the old man finally, wiping a tear of laughter from his eye.

Things looked pretty bleak. Shaggy and Scooby-Doo were goners for sure.



Then, amazingly, Shaggy and Scooby heard a familiar voice.
"Where have you two been? We've been looking all over for you!"
It was Daphne. And Velma and Fred were with her!
The other masks weren't ghosts after all. They were the neighborhood kids from the party!
And the old man wasn't a crazy, laughing ghost leader at all – he was just a regular person!

Most surprising of all, the mask that was chasing them was just that – a mask. It was lying on the ground, no longer spooky at all.

"Like, what's going on here?" Shaggy asked, rubbing his eyes in disbelief.

"Reah! Rhat?" Scooby echoed.

The old man, whose name was Mr. Fisk, explained. "I saw the whole thing! Earlier, I noticed that the house down the street had masks tied outside as Halloween decorations. The wind must have blown this one away. It really scared the wits out of you two when it blew up behind you.

"The twine tied to the mask got caught up in Velma's trees, so it scared everybody by dangling in front of the window. Then, when it blew over and scared Scooby and Shaggy into jumping into the bushes, I started laughing and couldn't stop! Sorry, but it was so funny, I couldn't help myself!"

"Somehow, the twine got wrapped around Scooby's tail," Mr. Fisk continued. "It seemed like the mask was following you. Air blowing through the eyeholes made it sound like it was moaning! I followed when you ran into the neighbor's backyard to tell you it was just a harmless mask, but you were too fast!

"In the backyard, the twine got snagged on a cat and then on a shirt on the clothesline. You two looked so silly that . . . well, sir, I took to laughing all over again! Then you ran off with the mask trailing right behind!"

"When Mr. Fisk told us what happened, we all started looking for you," said Daphne.

Now that the mystery was solved, everyone went back to the party – even Mr. Fisk. There were no more scary incidents and the kids all had a great time. Shaggy and Scooby had to admit that sometimes what happened in their imaginations was scarier than anything in real life.

"But, like, if I ever do have to run from a *real* creepy ghoul, I want my best pal beside me!" Shaggy exclaimed. "Right, Scoob?"

"Scooby-dooby-doo!" cheered Scooby, and he boogied down late into the night.

WHO WAS THAT MASKED MAN — ER, DOG — ANYWAY?

The kids from Mystery, Inc. are celebrating Halloween at a costume party. But when trick-or-treaters spot an eerie mask floating around the trees, things start getting a little spooky! Is there a ghost behind that mask? Or is someone out to spoil Halloween for all the kids in Coolsville? It's up to Fred, Velma, Daphne, Shaggy, and Scooby-Doo to find out!

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